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ABSTRACT

Rolling Terrace is a low-income, high-minority primary education school (grades headstart through 4) with higher than average test scores, a good atmosphere, and high teacher enthusiasm and dedication. Open-ended questions, observations, and a survey were used to gather information from all but 4 of the 51 faculty and staff members to determine the factors responsible for the school's success. Results identified the principal's high expectations for staff and students, excellent human relations skills, and energetic approach to work, combined with a long tenure and an ability to handpick appropriate staff members, as the explanation of the school's effectiveness. (5 references) (KM)

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Rolling Terrace: An Effective School Under Adverse Conditions

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Abstract

Rolling Terrace is a low-income, high minority school with rather good test scores, a good atmosphere and high teacher enthusiasm and dedication. Open-ended questions, observations and a survey were used to gather information to determine the factors responsible for the success of the school. The principal's high expectations for staff and students, excellent human relations skills, deep caring and energetic approach to work added to her long tenure with the ability to hand-pick appropriate staff appear to explain the school's effectiveness.

Paper prepared for the 1984 Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans

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Introduction

Rolling Terrace is an elementary school serving 360 students from Headstart through grade 4 in an area just outside a large metropolitan district on the Atlantic seaboard. The school is situated in an older area that is a mixture of single-family houses and apartments, the latter often poorly maintained. They are affordable for low-income tenants and have provided the first home for newly arrived immigrants.

During this study, Spring, 1982, the school population was 19% white, 23% black, 33% Hispanic and 24% Asian. At least 50% of the students had English as their second language. The student population was one of the most transient in the district.

The school had gone through a number of changes over the previous sixteen years. In 1966, the students were mainly middle class and white. This changed as Cuban professionals who had fled Castro moved in. The school population changed further as lower income blacks came in, followed by Koreans, Vietnamese professionals, poor refugees from Central America and Indochina.

Despite high transiency, cultural shifts, the many non-English speaking students and the large percentage of low-income students, the school maintained good test scores --better than those of neighboring, less diverse schools. In addition, the atmosphere in the school seemed particularly good, calm and welcoming. The teachers were enthusiastic when they talked to outsiders about the regular program and about the Spanish Bicultural and Bilingual programs, which were unique to the school.

The principal of sixteen years was about to retire. I was given the opportunity to go into the school and to determine why the atmosphere was so good, the teachers so enthusiastic and dedicated and to determine if these circumstances explained the good test scores.

The notion that the atmosphere was good was a general belief held by community members, occasional visitors to the school and by school system personnel. They felt this was so because, from the casual observer's point of view, students and staff got along well together, visitors were made to feel welcome in the school and the school was a place in which each student appeared to know what was expected of him or her. But did the staff perceive the atmosphere in the same way? And if they shared the perception, to what did they attribute it? It was necessary to establish if the atmosphere was indeed good and, if so, what caused it.

The staff was considered to be dedicated because whenever staff members appeared at a neighborhood meeting or program in the evening or on a Saturday, which they did frequently and willingly, they were very enthusiastic about being there and about what the school was doing. Teachers came to school well before the required time of arrival for teachers and stayed after school beyond the required time.

A connection between good atmosphere and staff dedication, if these indeed existed, had to be established. And, if they did, a relationship between this dedication and test scores? Finally, could successful elements at this school be replicated at other schools?

Because of the apparent success of this school in the face of several conditions usually considered adverse, I was interested in conducting a study of it and requested permission from the superintendent to do so. I submitted a project design to the superintendent, who approved the plan subject to the approval by the school principal. She was fully cooperative and paved the way with her staff by submitting my research outline to each member with a covering memo asking them to choose a time to be interviewed.

An Effective School

Rolling Terrace was singled out as effective for three reasons. First, within its high school feeder area, it was one of four schools that had that had undergone significant change in student population over the previous fourteen years. Despite the changes, including changes in racial, ethnic and language make-up of the school plus a high degree of transiency, it had maintained standardized test scores that were not only above the national average, but were above those of some of the less diverse schools in the high school area. Second, the school had a reputation for being a pleasant place to visit because of its good atmosphere, while several of the other schools, both diverse and not diverse either failed to receive positive comments or received negative comments from local staff and community members. Finally, The staff always gave the impression of being very ehtusiastic about the school program and about the students in the school. Where one often hears words of apology about student performance and potential in lower socio-economic level schools, at Rolling Terrace, such comments were not in evidence. Teachers, though recognizing that their students had some social and cultural aspects that might make teaching more difficult, also assumed that the difficulties could be overcome by dedicated work by teachers. In addition, at a time when the schools of that area were desegregating and developing magnet programs, these teachers were among the most enthusiastic spokespeople for their own magnet program both within thie school and at public meetings.

Though these are not the standard ways of defining effectiveness, these are the reasons this school was considered effective.

Procedure --Rationale

Guba and Lincoln (1981) emphasize the importance of a research method that does not presume specific answers to questions. They encourage open-ended questioning that allows a va-

riety of information to be gathered. Such an approach may uncover information that might not surface in more structured questioning. The information may be of critical importance in explaining a given situation. Rather than yielding to the temptation of saying the principal was the reason for the good atmosphere, high test scores and good morale, I decided to find out how the staff described themselves, the school and its success or failure and then to draw conclusions from their responses. However, one can not go into such a situation with no framework. There must be some basis for choosing questions and some feeling for the factors that might be important to successful schools.

I based my questions on the work of two authors, Rutter et al. (1979) and Wynne(1980), who conducted descriptive studies of schools. Rutter sought reasons for success of schools as groups of London students passed from school to school. Wynne was seeking characteristics that would explain the differences between what he defined as good, bad and indifferent schools.

Many of Rutter and Wynne's observations involved teacher expectations of and interactions with students. However, the tone set by the principal in his/her expectations, administrative skills and interpersonal relationships with staff and students was also considered part of the ethos of the school.

In addition, I based the questions on Goldman's (1981) model of leadership effectiveness that looked at six elements: administrative skills, human relations skills, ability to accept challenges, communication structures and processes and commitment.

My initial interest was in looking at the school as viewed by the present school staff and community, but I wanted to learn how the school had reached the present point, too.

Methods

The study was conducted between May 3 and May 21, 1982. During that time, I interviewed the principal, teachers' aides, secretaries, building service workers and cafeteria workers, including all but four members of the staff. I attended one PTA Executive Committee meeting, one PTA meeting that was combined with a musical performance by students, five faculty meetings and two meetings outside the building with the principal. I observed the teachers either in their rooms or in other interactions with the students. I observed numerous meetings the principal had in her office and in other parts of the building and observed her working in her office. I also administered a paper and pencil survey to the teachers. In general, the information in this report came from the interviews and general observations. The survey results bore out the results of the interviews.

Most interviews lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. I started with general questions concerning length of time on the job, in the district and in the school. I then asked staff members why they came to this school, why they stayed, whether or not they were good at their job and what made them good. The rest of the questions focused on what they believed made the school good, what interactions existed, what role staff members played in school decision-making, and what supports they expected from the principal and from each other. Teachers' questions differed from those for aides and building service workers. I changed the questions as time went on, making them more open-ended in an attempt to uncover new information that might be missed with more structured questions.

The School

The school is one of the older buildings in the district. It was built in 1950. It is L shaped with an extra wing at the end of one hall. The principal's office is located at the elbow of the L. The classrooms are self-contained and on either side of central halls. The interior walls are cinderblock with one large display bulletin board outside each classroom. The bulletin boards were neatly decorated with student work. The walls were clean and the floors shone.

There were two unusual features to the walls. In the primary grade wing, the walls were decorated with large nursery rhyme characters, which had been painted by a teacher. The principal had pleasant memories of nursery rhymes from her childhood and wanted these children to have similar pleasant memories to take with them from their early school years. The other unusual feature was a band painted along the wall. It consisted of two stripes, one brown and the other turquoise, located at a perfect height for children who like to run their hands along the wall. This allowed then to do so, without being scolded for soiling the cream colored walls.

The Principal

The principal had been raised in a small town in the northeast. She had a strict upbringing. She taught high school for seven years before getting married and then had taught more. She had also worked for the OSS during the war. She had been in the district school system for twenty-eight years. Eight of those years had been as assistant elementary principal, four as a principal of another school and then the last sixteen years had been at Rolling Terrace.

When she was assigned to the school, she followed three principals who had served a total of five years. She started to change the rules immediately. Leading children through the halls in orderly lines and meeting them at the entrances became accepted standards of behavior. A teacher who was there at the start of the principal's tenure said she got people to try the

new rules simply by asking politely.

The principal said it took two or three years to build staff and community confidence. Several teachers were problems for her, but she worked with them, attempting to correct them. There was a nucleus of good teachers, too, although the principal commented that there wasn't the closeness on the staff that exists today. She felt changes had come about because she had respect for each person and she planned with each grade level. This developed team work. Translating PTA newsletters into Spanish when the large Hispanic population arrived, helped build community confidence.

Her philosophy of education was that everyone able to be in school can learn. It was essential to have expectations high enough to provide for all children. That was something all staff must believe. Then the staff needed to do everything to make that learning occur in a practical but interesting situation. It was important to establish love of learning as early as possible. It took professionals, students and home working together, to make a success.

She had an enormous amount of energy and worked long hours to complete each task. She worked late at school and then took papers home and worked late every night. She had a good sense of humor and found little trouble laughing at herself.

The principal was one of more than a hundred principals in the district, but she had more than the usual amount of respect both in her school and in the school system. Her retirement dinner attracted the top level of the school system's current administration and even a former administrator, now a college president, who came several hundred miles for the event. In addition many teachers who had served under her in years past, fellow principals, community leaders and a Board of Education member attended, making it an unusually large group for such an event.

The Staff

Students were served by ten full-time grade-level teachers, five other full-time teachers, ten part-time teachers and sixteen aides. In addition, there were three cafeteria workers, three building service workers, a full-time secretary, one part-time secretary and a part-time nurse.

Six teachers and four aides had never worked for another principal. On the average, the teachers had been at the school for seven years and the aides for five.

There had been a passing interest in team teaching and two rooms had been structurally adjusted for teaming. However, this physical feature was not used. There was no grade-level teaming for language or mathematics, but some existed for science and

social studies. However there were English language, Spanish, speech and instrumental music pull-out programs.

Interpersonal Relations

The staff seemed to get along well with each other and with the principal. They had great respect for her, listened to her ideas and concerns, and felt free to share their personal problems. Some felt free to share their professional ideas though a fair number felt that it was difficult to get a new idea implemented and they felt she did not actively encourage new ideas. Though the principal would accept criticism, it was clear from stories she and staff members told, that criticism hurt her and she worried when she felt she had done something worthy of criticism. This worrying made the staff uncertain about whether she held criticisms or disagreements against them. The principal kept well informed about each crisis and success that staff members were facing and stopped to make personal comments of praise or concern. The staff willingly put in extra time at many after school faculty meetings. Teachers met together and shared experiences after school, before they started to plan for the next day. There were school parties, snacks, baby and bridal showers, and two annual parties, one at Christmas and one at the end of the school year. In addition, teachers supported each other and the school by appearing in force at the student participation PTA meeting one was responsible for preparing.

Formal communication in the school was done in the normal way. There were memos to the teachers, announcements over the public address system, and newsletters for parents. The principal was very thorough about writing memos. However, since aides, part-time specialists and building service workers didn't attend faculty meetings, some information never reached them even though teachers were supposed to convey the essence of faculty meetings to the aides.

Ethos and School Norms

Rutter (1979) believed there was a combined effect of different factors that resulted in a school ethos. Thus, he stated that process variables had a pervasive effect on children's behavior and were indirectly linked with outcome. Some variables were involved with conditions of the school, in general, such as care of the building, management of groups and mode of response to individual children. Rutter pointed to studies that recognize schools as social organizations that develop their own norms and noted that groups influence members to conform to the norms.

Rolling Terrace had some school norms which became evident as the staff discussed the school. The norms existed in a school that was governed by the principal's set of organizational rules.

Behavioral Environment

Responsibility for students was carried out by supervising

students all day. Teachers were to be not just in the building at 8:30, which the contract demands, but in their classrooms so that children who came to school early could have some place to go and be supervised, rather than being on the playground unsupervised until 8:50. This gave them a quiet start to the day. As soon as they arrived at school, the students could enter, buy a lunch ticket, get breakfast and then go to their classrooms. Soft voices and considerate behavior were expected. Students ate breakfast and talked quietly, producing little noise despite the fact that the aide who was watching them was not patrolling, but sitting at a table taking breakfast tickets. When they were done, individual students walked, unattended, to class. Classes of children were led down the halls in lines by their teachers. Students ate lunch in their classrooms with their teachers. Children were to be met at the end of lunch recess and led back in. Teachers were expected to be in school at least until the official departure time. They could request early departure which was granted for good cause. All visitors and all notices leaving the school needed principal approval. The principal had set these rules when she had first come to the school sixteen years earlier. They still held and were not questioned.

Questions and Responses

The initial four questions, asked of everyone, were designed to set people at ease and yield general information. From staff responses, it emerged that virtually everyone was interviewed before they came. A number of the aides lived in this community or close by. At least two were also active in the PTA. Staff members stayed for a variety of reasons: they liked the location, the school, the children, the smallness of the school, and the self-contained rooms. Several noted that they liked working with different nationalities. Some liked working where children need you and felt that children from lower socio-economic homes had special needs. Many felt they were dealt with fairly, liked the cooperation of teachers, liked their program and felt secure about teaching here. A few mentioned that it was easier to stay than make a change.

Nearly all teachers felt that they were good teachers. Several felt they could be even better. When asked what made a good teacher, the responses included: a person with a good general education, who keeps "current" in her field, who knows the materials and enjoys learning. In addition the staff felt that good teachers like children, work well with them, and are sensitive to their needs. They care and have high expectations for children. Creativity, enthusiasm, effective planning, discipline, self-confidence and adaptability were other necessary attributes they mentioned.

On the other hand, they said poor teachers had the attitude that they were just doing a job. They weren't patient. They were uncaring, unstimulating, unprepared, disorganized and inflexible.

Questions after the first four yielded the following information about expectations for various levels of staff.

The principal had high academic and behavioral expectations for others. It was assumed that there would be completed plan books, well prepared lessons, orderly classrooms and halls, and teachers present before and after school. She expected teachers to know curricula, to identify and meet individual student needs and discipline their classes. They were to consider all children as teachable, demand that each child work to his/her limit, and love and respect each child regardless of the child's racial, ethnic, socio-economic or national background. When interviewing teachers, she would warn them that if they wanted to teach in schools with the very top test scores, they should look elsewhere. Though this might sound like "low" rather than "high" expectations, in the context of the school district, it was an attempt to make the teachers face the fact that this school was not like so many others in the district. The school district as a whole was and is affluent. A large percentage of the parents are college educted professionals. A number of the schools in the district, including one only three miles away, top out the standardized tests. She wanted the teachers to understand that it would require more effort and skill to help each child reach his or her maximum. She took applicants around to see students and classrooms. She was very sensitive to applicants' questions and comments about the racial and ethnic make-up of the school and to their body language. Applicants were offered a job based on their responses and behavior as well as on their references.

Teachers did have high expectations for the academic success and appropriate behavior of the students. One teacher expressed this by saying, " I have an intensity. A desire for perfection. I want the kids to do the best they can. I'm that way too." Poor performance was never blamed on the multi-ethnic background or the socio-economic situation of the students. The teachers' job was to teach and the expectation was that each child could and would produce to his/her utmost and would behave with courtesy to others and follow the school rules.

Teachers were conscientious, diligent and creative. They assumed they should make lessons interesting. One of the aides commented, "Teachers never skip a group. They could with all the moving that goes on." Each teacher talked about constantly assessing where the students were using district-made tests and tests that accompanied the texts, and looked for new materials to teach children. They put in long hours and, again, this was assumed to be standard.

Teachers commented that they constantly evaluated themselves and searched for ways to improve. Teachers kept up with curriculum changes by taking courses. One wanted to learn new and better ways of

teaching non-English speaking students. Others wanted to learn new teaching techniques and approaches. All felt the need for more cultural sensitivity. Indeed, it was the teachers who asked for workshops to learn about the newly arrived national and ethnic groups.

Teachers were informed about the students' home problems and listened empathetically. One person commented, "The teachers have a genuine interest in kids." Teachers tended not to berate their students, but to offer criticism in a positive manner. Teachers were also considerate of each other and of aides. They helped and advised each other and shared materials and approaches to teaching.

Teachers were lavish in their praise of children. They not only praised good performance in lessons and good behavior, but also displayed student work and let some of the older students plan the displays.

The concern and sensitivity of the teachers was best summed up by one of the teachers who said, "I know my (teaching) area well. I can assess kids. I am effective. I have high expectations and I communicate them to parents. Children need to know they are important and worthy. I have high expectations and I don't let down. You have to be firm with kids. I have a feeling for where education will lead kids."

The principal had similar expectations for aides and non-teaching personnel. They were to be thorough and have the best interests of students and others at heart.

From the students, the principal expected high quality, neat work, done on time. She saw no reason why each shouldn't reach his/her maximum potential, and expected that. As one of the teachers put it, "She sees every child as teachable." She did not tolerate unkindness and thus would not stand for name calling. She expected good, courteous behavior.

The principal had expectations of herself, too, as described below. She considered it her job to protect teachers from extra, burdensome tasks. In one instance, a teacher discovered a student was coming into the district from another jurisdiction for school. The principal handled the problem, thus protecting the teacher from some unpleasantness.

The principal believed in supporting staff. She constantly made positive comments to outsiders. In one instance, a specialist was coming to test a student. The specialist was new to the school. All the way to the child's classroom, the principal was extolling the skills of the teacher.

The principal supported the staff by finding excellent people to fill the roster. She spent much time searching personnel files for people who would be right for her school. Her interview techniques assured that she hired people who would

fit. Staff's comments indicate they felt she succeeded in hand picking the staff. If she felt one person had special skills needed at a different grade level, she would encourage that person to switch grade levels and would acquire someone else to fill the vacancy left.

She followed through on what she agreed to do. She was always actively involved in planning PTA sponsored events. She followed through on getting my schedule completed, too, by reminding teachers several times how important setting the schedule was. She also followed through on discipline by keeping children out of class and in her office, by calling parents in, if needed, and by suspending students if that level of enforcemen was required. The majority of teachers felt she let children understand that they were being disciplined. As one teacher put it, "It is not fun to be sent to the office."

She also considered it essential for a principal to have knowledge of subject matter and teaching styles. She knew the curriculum fairly well, admitted her limitations and knew where to get help she couldn't give personally. She was particularly uncomfortable with the new math and felt inadequate when she had to observe math lessons, so she invited the math specialist to the school several times to help her and the teachers master the new curriculum.

She knew the school system and personnel well and was liked and respected by her superordinates. She knew where to go to get materials and personnel.

She believed both school and personal appearance should be neat and attractive. The custodian commented that she would pick up papers that were lying on the grounds. The floors shone, the school looked and smelled clean. The bulletin boards were always attractively decorated with help from the art teacher and were changed monthly. They contained student work. The principal also was very particular about her personal appearance and discussed her feeling of the importance to the children of the principal wearing bright tasteful clothes and matching accessories. A former teacher had commented that colorfulness and coordination had always been her hallmark.

She was available. Her door was always open. She could see down the hall and hear into the outer office, and called in passers-by to catch up on the latest concern. She could also stop anyone in view who was not following school rules. Children could and did come in to share their pictures and stories with her. One child brought in a book her father had written to share with the principal.

Active listening was important to her. She listened to everyone: staff, teachers, students and parents. She had knowledge of their home situation. She was aware of new

siblings, sick parents and graduating children. She knew when families were in difficult financial straits and would try to help. In the case of a family with many home problems, including truant children, she was distressed that she became aware, too late, that there would be no holiday celebration for the children because a welfare check had not come. She would have personally provided gifts. When one staff member had belongings stolen in a home burglary, she gave the teacher some of her own.

Virtually all the staff said they felt comfortable talking with her about any problems whether, student-related or personal, because she empathized with their problems, was sincerely concerned for them and was very open about her own.

Children came first. When a child was sick or late going home, she would take the child home herself, dropping whatever else she was doing. When a child made an emergency trip to the hospital, the principal went with and stayed with the child until the parents arrived.

She offered career advice. She encouraged some of her teachers and aides to take courses that would train them for careers or career changes. One parent was involved in getting a master's degree as a result of the principal's encouragement. The principal also actively encouraged professional growth by arranging for teachers and aides to use leave to attend workshops.

The principal felt evaluations were very important. She said that being a principal was not a popularity contest. Correction was very necessary, though it was not as pleasant as praising. She also believed in constructive criticism.

The result was fairness, a word used repeatedly by her staff. Both teachers and aides said she gave fair evaluations. Teachers were told how they might do things differently and where they might get help to improve some aspect of their teaching. Teachers felt they could disagree and defend their teaching practices. However, as mentionned earlier, they had some feeling that they shouldn't be too openly critical. They weren't sure whether she would hold criticism against them, but they knew that criticism hurt her very badly and that she dwelt upon things she felt were sources of criticism.

The principal was also fair in the sense of considerate. In one instance, when it was necessary to use aides for Title I testing, rather than arbitrarily assign aides, the principal went through an elaborate process of consulting aides and teachers to assure that no one was inconvenienced more than anyone else.

The principal gave people responsibility and expected them to do their part. She delegated work to committees and then guided and advised them. Committees of teachers worked on various internal policies. Committees of parents arranged for

fund-raising activites. The annual school fair was being planned during the study. For the committee, she gave advice on things to consider in setting up the fair: cost, previous earnings, weather and such. Though a few teachers felt they had too little input into the running of the school, some felt they had too much. At the faculty meetings I observed, teachers were asked for opinions on many topics, including how to inform parents of school boundary changes and transfer options, how to handle playground problems, how to deal with some misplaced materials and how to help out at the school fair.

The principal expected the school's operation to be undisturbed by changes within classrooms. She allowed people to try new things in the class if the general school structure was not disturbed. She was open to new ideas, but the approach to broaching a new idea was a key to what might be accepted. Most staff felt she weighed ideas and accepted new ones if she felt they weren't harmful or if she could see some benefit in them.

She did not see herself as infallible and was quick to criticize herself. She worried over a few decisions she had made and dwelt upon some evaluations she had made of staff. She apologized if she felt she had made a mistake and she generally tried to improve what she felt were her shortcomings.

She believed praise for good work was important and was lavish in praise. She saw all that was right, both in adults and children, and instinctively gave praise for a dance, a song, a paper, a report card, a kind act. Even when she scolded, the assumption in her wording was that the person could do <u>much</u> better. "She tells us how wonderful we are and we believe it. We're brainwashed." was the remark of one teacher. "The principal is remarkable. She's always saying how good we are and how hard we work. It boosts our ego. It helps when someone has faith in you." To children in a classroom, she praised the neatness and thoroughness and originality of work. She laughed delightedly at children's jokes and shared snacks they brought that were native to their homeland.

She gave teachers credit for the praise she and the school received for a variety of efforts, including an improved vandalism record and a quick and correct diagnosis of a dyslexic child.

She had great cultural sensitivity. She provided special training, including a special sensitivity training by a black expert, a workshop on Cambodia and other training by parents and community experts to lend higher cultural understanding to the teachers. Newsletters were sent home in Spanish, English, Vietnamese and Cambodian.

The principal's expectations and behavior were mirrored in the teachers. This led to norms for appearance, discipline, hard work and caring.

How did these principal norms become schoolwide norms? There are two possible explanations. The principal had been there for sixteen years. Gradually, she had choosen the staff members. When she chose, she sought people who had great sensitivity to others, who were unprejudiced and interested in teaching. Many of those chosen had taught for no one else. Thus, she created a group whose philosophy was very similar to hers. She also shaped people who were there. Of course, the value of strongly established norms is that they bring others to accept them. Thus, an ethos is created, in this case, an ethos based on caring, dedication, sensitivity.

Why Staff Said the Atmosphere Was Good

All staff members felt the atmosphere was good. Some credited the students "The kids are well-behaved." " The multi-cultural quality sets the atmosphere." Others credited the teachers. "The teachers are great." "The teachers leave their prejudices at home." "Teachers want to be satisfied with their own performance." "The teachers are human, kind, considerate, flexible and demanding." Some credited everyone, "The staff is close." "The people are caring." "They mind their own business." One credited the smallness of the school.

But most credited the principal. "The principal has high expectations." "She expects good teaching, lesson plans, preparation on the part of the staff." "She always has positive things to say." She is fair, open." "She helps with personal problems." "She sees that materials are available." "We want to please her." "We're not overly supervised, hung over." "Parents respect her and have faith in her." "She takes a personal interest in the children." One credited her by saying, "The staff creates the atmosphere. The principal picked them." Another said, "She controls, influences and chooses the teachers."

What Staff Said About the Test Scores

The staff was asked in three different ways what caused the good test scores. Some were asked to what extent the principal was responsible for the good test scores. Others were asked what caused the good test scores. Still others were asked how the principal influences test scores.

There were two parts to the answer. Most teachers felt they, not the principal, were responsible for good test scores. It was their training, high expectations, preparations and individualization and caring that produced results. Extra services such as the reading specialist, speech, ESOL, Spanish plus the Title I aides were also credited.

Many credited the principal, too, indirectly. "She has a positive attitude and makes kids feel they can do anything." "She places kids where they can succeed and have a positive

self-image and they work harder." " She emphasizes writing, following directions, neatness and finished work." "She takes a personal interest in what students are doing by reading report cards." " She makes personal comments to students about her expectations for their academic and social behavior."

Conclusions

The most important factor in this school was the principal, according to the staff. She was credited with the atmosphere, the enthusiasm and dedication of the staff and, indirectly, with the test scores because of atmosphere she created.

The principal had been at the school for sixteen years, long enough to establish rules and to select and train staff that reflected her philosophy. Ten staff members had worked for no one else. Most of the staff had been selected by her. She had a large enough core group of staff members who shared her philosophy to make it the school norm.

She provided the administrative supports teachers needed by obtaining materials, providing evaluation, training support in discipline and choosing staff that could meet student needs.

The norms that were extant at the school centered around high expectations for all students, responsibility for student behavior, a neat, orderly colorful student centered building and deep caring for others.

The element that the principal contributed that was so unique was the intense caring for people, children and adults, that transcended the normal term "human relations skills."

Can the success be recreated at other schools? Can we create another principal like this one? We can teach people a set of human relations skills. We can train them to know what administrative skills are and how to improve them. Likewise, we can train them in the importance of good communication and how to achieve it. We can even teach them the importance of involving staff in planning. But truly caring about children and adults is ingrained through various experiences people face from early childhood through adolescence and into adulthood. It is not something that can be taught in a training session or an administrative workshop. It is the caring that makes a principal willing to give a bad evaluation, correct teachers, demand discipline, have specific goals and high expectations and take the time to select only the very best teachers. It was this sort of caring this principal displayed.

It would be difficult, if not impossible to reproduce a principal like this one, but it is possible to screen out those who don't have that ingrained caring for children and adults, before they become principals.

But is caring necessary to all good principals? Is an effective principal possible with some other combination of skills? What effect does the school situation have? Is a different leader needed when a school situation is more adverse from what is needed in a school with little diversity and adversity? Is there perhaps a principal-teacher-school situation dynamic at work in effective schools so that one element is more important in one situation while in another, other elements becomes central?

Greenfield (1982) has called for more studies that look at what the principal does in a school. "The descriptive texts such studies yield are... extremely valuable in identifying the critical and situational variables and relationships underlying explanations of the antecedents and consequences of principal behavior."

This study adds to the knowledge base by presenting an intimate view of a principal as viewed by herself, the school staff and an outside observer. She succeeded in creating an effective school under what would normally be considered adverse circumstances. Her success seems to have resulted from her deep concern for the staff and students, her involvement of them in school planning and her careful selection of teachers well suited to the school population. Although this study was conducted in considerable depth, it represents but one "statistic." Similar studies should be performed on several more effective and ineffective schools to identify attributes that may be common to the former and missing from the latter. In particular, among the effective schools, which factors are similar in the operations of the princpals and which vary, depending on their personal styles of operation.

These questions need yet to be answered and further studies need to be done. The bottom line has not been written.

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